

The Community of St. Matthew



*... exists
in the world
as a visible
expression of
God's love.*



Dear Saint Matthew Community and Friends,

The Archdiocese is in the process of planning for restructuring parishes, schools and ministries. In large part what prompts this process is the dwindling number of priests and increasing financial burdens. This restructuring may well involve the merging of parishes and schools and in some cases the closing of parishes and schools.

The following is a thoughtful article that appeared in a Catholic magazine – *Commonweal* – two weeks ago.

Yours truly,



Stephen Adrian
Pastor

Commonweal
September 25, 2009 / Volume CXXXVI, Number 16

Priestless

Kenneth L. Parker

In 1742, a Franciscan friar reported to Rome the remarkable news that a hitherto unknown Christian community had been discovered on a river island in Nubia, the region south of what had once been Roman Egypt. The Nubian church was thought to have been extinct for centuries, cut off as it was from other Christian communions.

But this ancient Nubian church, established no later than the fourth century, had persevered through a millennium of Islam and periods of isolation from the patriarchate of Alexandria, which traditionally supplied it with bishops. Pondering the fate of the Nubian church, the Franciscan posed a rhetorical question: "Did Nubia go astray from the Christian faith?" His answer was surprising but unequivocal: "Only because of a lack of pastors."

The Nubian laity had long struggled to keep the faith. In the early 1500s, a Syrian traveler reported finding more than 150 well-tended churches, with crucifixes, altars, and images of the blessed Virgin. While the people were not officially Christian, the traveler found they "lived in the desire of being Christians." Then in the 1520s, a Western Christian witnessed perhaps the last attempt by the Nubian laity to revive their dying church. Since contact with the mother church in Alexandria was impossible, six Nubian Christians traveled to Ethiopia and begged the emperor there for priests and monks. But the Ethiopian church was struggling with its own challenge. It also depended on Alexandria for its abuna (bishop), and in the decades-long absence of a bishop-its clergy were aging and dying. So the emperor sent the Nubians away, and their church disappeared for a lack of pastors. By 1742, only a stray remnant of this once-thriving ancient church remained.

The Nubian people had carried on for generations with their desire to remain Christian, but church leadership had failed them. No doubt these leaders were sincere and well meaning. Bishops had always come from Alexandria, and priestly ordination depended on them. But when circumstances changed because of the Islamic ascent, the ecclesiastical structures intended to supply pastoral care and evangelical witness failed to adapt. Preserving customary discipline took precedence over spreading the good news and nurturing the faithful with word and sacraments. It was not Islam that destroyed Nubian Christianity. Church leaders-who did not adapt to the needs of their time-strangled the faith of a people who desired to live as Christians.

This type of failure is being repeated today. From the Vatican to local dioceses, the church's hierarchy refuses to consider a practice that already exists in the Western rite and that could easily be expanded: the ordination of married men to the priesthood. This unwillingness to adapt has tragic consequences. Parishes are being consolidated or closed-even though they are viable and thriving-because there are not enough clergy to staff them. In many rural regions, aging priests travel hundreds of miles to provide the sacraments to small faithful communities of Catholics. In both urban and suburban areas, solitary parish priests are charged with the care of thousands of families. Yet they cannot even supply the essential sacramental ministry, much less engage in the pastoral care or spiritual counsel so many people long for and cannot find.

The widespread absence of priests to provide the sacraments is forcing the laity to do without, or to seek spiritual nurture in other ecclesial communities. Increasingly, laypeople with pastoral degrees are being asked to act as parish administrators; and more than half the theologians teaching in Catholic colleges and universities today are laypeople. But these men and women, while doing the best they can within present church structures, cannot make up for the absence of priests.

Like the Franciscan friar who discovered the vestigial Nubian church, we must ask ourselves what is happening to our once-thriving church. One thing is now undeniable: In many regions of the world, the church is becoming smaller because of the lack of available pastors. The Nubian example suggests that the challenges the church faces today are fundamental and beyond the ability of the laity alone to solve. So the real question is: Are the pope and bishops going to fulfill their sacred obligation to us? The customary means of supplying priests must change. The faithful pray that we will not suffer the fate of the ancient Nubian church.

EDUCATION AND
FAITH FORMATION NEWS

COFFEE FOR A CAUSE

Coffee hours after both Sunday masses are hosted and served by Gloria Deziel, Joe Bieza, Caitlin, Jason and Sarah Bieza in support of Feed my Starving Children, a non profit organization that gathers volunteers to work assembling dry packed, nutritionally balanced meals scientifically calculated to revive starving children. The meals are packed Eagan, MN and shipped to more than 60 Countries worldwide. Examples of their work and information will be on display. Come to the Social Hall and see about all the good ministries at St. Matthews supports and enjoy tasty treats too. Last week's C4aC raised \$33.00 in support of the St. Matthew's Maintenance Department. Call John DelVecchio at 651-221-0871 to arrange hosting your own Coffee for a Cause.

SERVICE MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS

Save the date of Saturday, November 7, 2009. There will be a social gathering of ministry volunteers at 9:00 a.m. in the Social Hall. Please sign up in the back of Church to 1) let us know you are coming and 2) to bring a dish to share.

SCHOLASTIC BOOKFAIR

St. Matthew's School is having their annual Scholastic book fair on Sunday, October 18, after each mass. Be sure to stop by the school and check out this year's selection!

SINGERS AND INSTRUMENTALISTS: WE NEED YOU!!!

Rehearsals are beginning and are on going. So far we are groups of approximately 20-25 singers and instrumentalists who are willing to make a commitment to the work of liturgy and music at St. Matthew's 3 weekend liturgies (plus other special celebrations.) This is your invitation to join us as we continue to grow in faith, have fun and become part of a small community within this faith community. No auditions! Just come to the rehearsals!

The Adult Choir rehearses on Wednesdays from 7-8:15 in the Church. Fall rehearsals begin on Sept. 9.

Children's Choir (Grades 4-8) Rehearsals start on Wednesday October 7 from 2:45-3:30.

The Guitar Group practices one hour before their scheduled liturgies. This group plays once a month, rotating between the 5 and 10:30 masses. Call Bonnie at the parish office if you are interested in this group. All instruments welcome.

Questions? Call Bonnie at the parish office, 651-224-9793.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CARD & ORNAMENT BOUTIQUE

You are invited to our Annual Christmas Card & Ornament Boutique to benefit St. Mary's Health Clinics. Thursday, October 15, 2009, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM at 668 Ohio Street, St. Paul. St. Mary's Health Clinics and it's partners provide free health care to 12,000 people who are uninsured or underinsured.

They were exceedingly astonished and said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God." - Mk 10:26-27

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD.

THIS WEEK AT
SAINT MATTHEW

Sunday	October 11
Ministry Fair after masses	
Monday	October 12
3:00 PM, SH	Loaves and Fishes
6:45 PM, XC	Boy Scout Meeting
Tuesday	October 13
9:00 AM, PC	Alum's & Friends
2:00-6:00 PM, PC	St. Mary's Clinic
3:00 PM, SH	Loaves and Fishes
6:00 PM, CH	Rosary Society Mass
6:30 PM, SH	Rosary Society Supper
Wednesday	October 14
9:15 AM, MC	School Mass
1:00-6:00 PM, PC	St. Mary's Clinic
2:45 PM, MC	Children's Choir
3:00 PM, SH	Loaves and Fishes
6:30 PM, SC	Religious Education, Grades 1-10
7:00 PM, MC	Adult Choir
8:00 PM, SH	Men's Club
Thursday	October 15
3:00 PM, SH	Loaves and Fishes
6:00 PM, XC	Cub Scout Committee
6:30 PM	Girl Scouts
Friday	October 16
Saturday	October 17
Sunday	October 18
Parish Annual Meeting	
Book Fair in the School	
4:00 PM, XC	Cub Scout Pack Mtg.

Abbreviations:

MC – Main Church
CH – Chapel
PC – Parish Center
SH – Social Hall
SC – School
CC – Child Care
XC – Extended Day

STEWARDSHIP

In today's Gospel, Jesus asks the rich young man to give away all that he has in order to have treasure in heaven. But he is unable to free himself from his possessions, and so he goes sadly away. Does what I own keep me from following Jesus?

In today's first reading from Wisdom the writer talks about the real gifts that should be prayed for: understanding and wisdom. They are better than all else: "all good things came to me along with wisdom..."

Sharing Last weekend: \$10,276. Thank you. The yearly total: \$126,585 is \$615 behind the budgeted amount. That is but \$44 per weekend. However, remember that last weekend was the first one of the month.

Other dollars: \$927 in school envelopes; \$130 for the food shelf; \$10 for Assumption. Thank you for these dollars. They will be given as directed; remember that 1/2 of all given for food shelf stays at St. Matt's for the needy who come to our door; the other 1/2 goes to Neighborhood House food shelf for the those in need.

Service: Thanks to Jim Pirkl who crafted a second railing for the worship space. Thanks, too, for money counting, served funeral lunch, Loaves & Fishes, Eucharist to homebound.

Prayer: Daily: rosary, mass, spiritual reading, meal prayers... different time increments in prayer each week.

Parish annual meeting: next Sunday, October 18 between Masses on Sunday morning. The annual report is available at the doors today.

Crop walk: next Sunday. Walk for the support of programs for the hungry, or sponsor the walking group from St Matt's, or both. Assembly is at 1:00PM at Cherokee Park United Church [Baker and Manomin].

WEEKLY READINGS

Readings for the Week of October 11, 2009
 Sunday: Wis 7:7-11/Heb 4:12-13/Mk 10:17-30 or 10:17-27
 Monday: Rom 1:1-7/Lk 11:29-32
 Tuesday: Rom 1:16-25/Lk 11:37-41
 Wednesday: Rom 2:1-11/Lk 11:42-46
 Thursday: Rom 3:21-30/Lk 11:47-54
 Friday: Rom 4:1-8/Lk 12:1-7
 Saturday: Rom 4:13, 16-18/Lk 12:8-12
 Next Sunday: Is 53:10-11/Heb 4:14-16/Mk 10:35-45 or 10:42-45

PARISH DIRECTORY

Saint Matthew Church Office..... 651-224-9793
 Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM-4:00 PM
 Web site: st-matts.org
 Bulletin Email: bulletin.editor@st-matts.org

Pastoral Staff

Pastor..... Father Stephen Adrian
 Deacon..... Rev. John Murphy
 Parish Pastoral Administrator..... John Riehle
 Dir. Education & Formation..... Doug Lieser
 Dir. Music & Liturgy Bonnie Faber
 Dir. Child Care and KLT Shar LaVelle
 Bookkeeper Cindy Hoffman
 Administrative Assistant Nicole Johnson
 Dir. Food Service Donna Jenniges
 Parish Engineer..... David Rosas

Phone Numbers

Fax..... 651-228-9448
 Parish School..... 651-224-6912
 KLT Kids 651-665-0786
 Child Care Center..... 651-224-1459
 Liturgy and Music Voicemail..... 651-310-0830
 Prayer line 651-686-5463 or 651-455-6886

Schedule of Services

Weekend Liturgies Saturday: 5:00 PM
 Sunday: 8:00 & 10:30 AM
 Weekday Liturgies Monday-Friday: 6:45 AM
 1st Friday: 6:45 AM & 5:15 PM

Reconciliation

Tuesday..... 7:15 AM
 Saturday..... 4:00 PM

Sacrament of Baptism

Parents who are parishioners make arrangements with the Pastor or the Deacon one month prior to baptism.

Sacrament of Marriage

Couples make arrangements with the Pastor or the Deacon six months prior to wedding. Must be a member of the parish

Parish Council Members

Parish Council email: parishcouncil@st-matts.org

Karen Thompson Georgann Henjum
 Connie Aligada Joyce Osborne
 Jason Delmont Anthony Minus
 Dean Steinbrenner Chris Stevens
 Stephen Adrian David Burrows